



Lovely American Socialite

Mrs. George Jay Gould Jr.

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Music in Australia

"A LOT of music is being written in Australia, but none that could be called exclusively Australian; like New Zealand, Australia is young, and it takes centuries for a country to develop a national musical idiom." So Dr. Edgar Bainton told *The Listener* when he arrived in Wellington the other day. Dr. Bainton is, of course, no stranger to New Zealanders. He has been here frequently as an examiner for the Royal Schools of Music, as a judge for the Wellington Competitions, as a lecture-recitalist, and as a guest conductor of the National Orchestra of the NZBS. He is a former Director of the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music and he is here now to take charge of the National Orchestra pending the appointment of a permanent conductor.



Spencer Digby photograph

DR. EDGAR BAINTON

"There is certainly some interest among Australians in that appointment," he said. "It's a worthwhile and acceptable job—something of a plum—and if I were a bit younger, I'd have had a shot at it myself."

"Conducting an orchestra is a great experience for a young musician, for he has at his hands something he can build up, mould and influence. It can also have its difficulties—and that recalls a story Sir Malcolm Sargent told me once. Sargent was invited to conduct the big Palestine Symphony Orchestra founded by Hubermann. Every member was a magnificent player. 'That was the hardest job I ever did,' said Sargent. 'All were fine soloists and each wanted to play in his own individual style instead of as a single body.'"

Influence of Goossens

Speaking of orchestral music in Australia, Dr. Bainton said that Eugene Goossens had exercised a "powerful influence" on the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, which now ranked with many of the good orchestras of England. It was a good thing for players to work consistently under the same conductor for a long period—especially a man of the musical stature of Goossens. He had introduced several works which were only names in this part of the world, and which had not hitherto been heard in Australia. One of them, presented at a concert conducted last year by Rafael Kubelik, was Martinu's *Double Concerto*, and another was Vaughan Williams' *Sixth Symphony*. At the end of July Goossens conducted, among other works, the first Australian performance of Stravinsky's *Apollon Musagètes* in a new arrangement for string orchestra which the composer completed in 1937.

In August Australia was visited by Otto Klemperer, the German composer and conductor.

"What are Australian musicians doing about composing music for films?" he was asked.

"Quite a bit," said Dr. Bainton. "I've been invited to do some composing myself. The Federal Government often asks for serious music for documentary films. That's a good thing, of course, because it encourages younger writers and provides them with a potential market. Then, on the other hand, people in the picture theatres hear this good music, and even if they don't listen to it very attentively, it enters into their mentality."

"Of the foreign musicians who made a home in Australia during the war, how many are still there?"

"The majority, I should say. They have had a good and helpful influence. Chamber music, for instance, was somewhat in the doldrums, but it revived with the stimulation given by some of the southern Europeans. The Musica Viva players are a case in point. Numbers of foreigners take part in chamber music concerts, and there are the others, the good listeners, who form a considerable part of concert-goers."

Asked if the Sydney Symphony Orchestra intended to take part in the Edinburgh Festival this year, Dr. Bainton said that there was some talk of a visit, not this year, but in 1951. Whether it would come to anything he didn't know.

The National Orchestra of the NZBS has already started rehearsals for the 1950 season, which will include a tour of both the North and South Islands. Dr. Bainton will rehearse and conduct the orchestra till about April next. With the violinist Francis Rosner, he will also be heard in a series of four chamber music recitals from 2YA, beginning on February 2 at 7.30 p.m. In these programmes the two artists will present the works written by Brahms for violin and piano.